



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

**At Leading Edge we are committed to igniting aspiration and ambition in our communities.  
This includes promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all our children.**

Last review date	September 2022
Date approved by the Trust Board	October 2022
Date for next review	Summer 2023

## Document Control

Document version numbering will follow the following format. Whole numbers for approved versions, eg 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 etc. Decimals will be used to represent the current working draft version, eg 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc. For example, when writing a procedural document for the first time the initial draft will be version 0.1.

The table below provides details of the changes made to this document, to inform those reviewing and approving the document.

Document Edition	Section	Details of Change
0.1	All	New draft policy
1.0	All	Approved by the Trust Board on 7 July 2022
1.1	All	Updated in light of new DfE guidance for September 2022
2.0	All	Updated policy approved by the Trust Board on 12 October 2022

## Senior Leader Responsible for School Attendance:

### Contact Details:

Headteacher - Rob Hamshar – [head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk)

School Attendance Governor - Dave Sharpe - [dsharp@leadingedgeacademies.org](mailto:dsharp@leadingedgeacademies.org)

## Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Policy Statement</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Aims and Objectives</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Legislation and guidance</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Definitions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Authorised absence.....	7
Unauthorised absence .....	7
<b>Procedures</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Responsibilities</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Parents/Carers</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Class Teacher/Tutor</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Senior Leadership Team</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Headteachers (or member of senior staff with responsibility for attendance)</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Attendance Officer</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>The attendance officer is Rob Hamshar and can be contacted via 01736763324</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>The governing board</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Attendance register</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Lateness</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Absences</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>First Day Contact</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Illness</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Promoting Good Attendance</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Legal sanctions</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Addressing Attendance Concerns</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Monitoring and reviewing attendance within school</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Reporting to parents/carers</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Monitoring attendance</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Analysing attendance</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Using data to improve attendance</b> .....	<b>15</b>

<b>Reducing persistent and severe absence .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Monitoring arrangements .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Appendix A – AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM TIME .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix B - INFORMATION LETTER TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS (ANNUAL) .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix C – EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE LEAVE REQUEST NOTICE TO PARENTS/CARERS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix D: PN MODEL LEAVE REFUSAL LETTER (for school use).....</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix E: School letters .....</b>	<b>24</b>

## Introduction

The Leading Edge Academies Partnership (the 'Trust') is a team of school leaders that aim to be Leading Edge and pioneering in their approach to education and well-being. We are a growing family of like-minded schools that offer a values-based education to the communities we serve and welcome staff, workers, pupils, parents/carers and volunteers from all different ethnic groups and backgrounds.

The term 'Trust Community' includes all staff, trustees, governors, pupils, parents/carers, volunteers and visitors.

We are a values-based Trust, which means all actions are guided by our three 'Es' as follows:

- **Excellence** – 'Outstanding quality'
- **Evolution** – 'Continuous change'
- **Equity** – 'Fairness and social justice'

This policy is based on the value of **'Equity'**

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding
- Supporting Children at School with Medical needs/Managing Medicines
- Mental Health and Wellbeing

## Policy Statement

St Hilary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance by all. Only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

St Hilary School recognises its responsibilities to ensure children are in school and on time, therefore having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all pupils registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils who are registered at our school on our school website.

This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children Acts, Education Acts, Regulations and Guidance from the Department for Education in addition to guidance from the Local Authority.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the whole academy community; pupils, parents/carers, tutors, teachers, support staff and Governors, work together with other professionals and agencies to ensure that all children are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning, which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A pupil whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at school, miss just over four half-terms of learning or 19 full school days in each year.

The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

## **Aims and Objectives**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff, parents and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Support the safeguarding of all children and families ensuring that pupils are in school.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage in children a sense of their own responsibility.
- Improve students' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve 96% attendance (all pupils excepting those with chronic health issues).
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school and the community by raising the awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a pupil's education.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers and staff, so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, especially class teachers and our attendance officer, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents/carers understand the responsibility placed on them for making sure their pupil attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping pupils with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school that are preventing good attendance by identifying barriers to school and developing strategies to overcome these.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Definitions

### *Authorised absence*

- An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, unavoidable medical/dental appointments (try to make these after school if at all possible).
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised. Where the absences are not authorised, we will inform parents/carers of this.

### *Unauthorised absence*

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the school. (Unauthorised holiday constitutes an unauthorised absence.)
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- If the absence is unauthorised the Education Welfare Services will be notified of the absence and consideration will be given to a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings for non-attendance. A Penalty Notice is issued to each parent/carers of each pupil taken out of school and that this carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine is not paid on time, it may result in legal action being taken against parents/carers. **Parents/carers have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. Legal action under Section 444(1) can result in a fine of up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months imprisonment.**

A Penalty Notice will be considered if a pupil's attendance is deemed as 'not regular'. This is defined by the Trust as where the child's attendance is less than 96% for the previous twelve months.

Further information on avoidable absences and the Law can be found in Appendix A.

## Procedures

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- Record attendance twice daily (and in case of secondary schools in each lesson) and consistently record absence or lateness.
- Clearly communicate the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- Follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- Inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Strongly discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- Work with parents/carers and other agencies to improve individual pupil's attendance and punctuality.
- Refer to the attendance officer any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- Report attendance statistics to Cornwall LA and the DfE where requested.

## Responsibilities

All members of our school community have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

### Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter/prescription paperwork or packet.)
- As far as possible ensure that non-urgent medical or dental appointments are made outside of the school day or avoiding registration periods.
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school – class teacher, SLT member, attendance officer - as soon as possible about any pupil's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.
- Promote the link between attendance and attainment/progress.

### Class Teacher/Tutor

Class teachers/tutors are responsible for:

- Welcoming pupils at the beginning of the day and for each lesson.
- Celebrating high attendance rates both verbally and through the school's rewards system.



Class teachers/tutors are the child's first point of contact and will monitor daily attendance by:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes.
- Highlighting concerns regarding attendance with parents/carers and or pupils.
- Discussing attendance during parent consultations or at individual parent meetings.
- Raising concerns with the Attendance Officer where necessary.

### **Senior Leadership Team**

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is the headteacher - Rob Hamshar - and can be contacted via 01736 763324 or [head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk))

### **Headteachers (or member of senior staff with responsibility for attendance)**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **Attendance Officer**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance / senior leadership team and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the SLT / headteacher/ LAC (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

## **The attendance officer is Rob Hamshar and can be contacted via 01736763324**

- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Making referrals to other agencies as appropriate.
- Meet parents/carers in danger of being issued a first warning.
- Liaise with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Inform the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Provide background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Follow up absences with immediate requests for explanation via telephone calls or email.
- Ensure attendance issues are raised by teachers at parent consultation evenings where necessary.
- Collate and record registration and attendance information.
- Take and record messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- contact parents/carers of absent children where no reason for absence received
- record details of pupils who arrive late or go home
- send out standard letters regarding attendance.

The Attendance Officer has the responsibility for ensuring that all attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Educational Welfare Officer to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings, such as letters sent to parents/carers or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns.

## **The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

A named Governor for attendance will maintain an overview of procedures in relation to attendance.

The Trust Education Committee will have an overview of policies relating to attendance and attendance across all schools.

## **Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.00 am each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.00 am and will be kept open until 9.15 am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.00 and will be kept open until 13.15.

All attendance records are documented using SIMs software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and must be kept securely and preserved for a period of three years after the date they were last used.

## **Lateness**

Any pupil who comes into school after 9.15 am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil (attendance code L).

Any child who arrives for school later than 9.30 am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning (attendance code U).

Pupils who have attended a dentist or doctor appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00 am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (attendance code M). Where possible routine dentist or doctor appointments should be made outside of the school day.

Pupils who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness:

Penalty Notices will be considered for pupils with persistent unauthorised lateness in line with Cornwall Council guidance on the use of Penalty Notices.

- The Senior Leader responsible for attendance will meet with the parent/carer to create an action plan to improve punctuality. Should punctuality not improve, the Local Authority may be approached to give consideration for a fixed penalty notice.

## **Absences**

Parents/carers should contact the school each day of their absence from the first day of their child's absence. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with full details of the reason for their absence. Please avoid using phrases such as "poorly" or "sick".

Parents should be aware of the advice in [HSC Guidance on Infection Control](#) and any subsequent information in relation to pandemics eg Covid-19.

All absences are recorded as either authorised or unauthorised absences on the computer. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher has the responsibility to determine whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence within 5 days, the absence is recorded as unauthorised (attendance code O), in line with Department for Education Guidance.

Parents/carers should inform the school of any relevant factors eg bereavement which could affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour.

## **First Day Contact**

Where a child is absent from school, parents/carers should contact the school office – 01736 763324 / [secretary@st-hilary.cornwall.sc.uk](mailto:secretary@st-hilary.cornwall.sc.uk) – by 9.15am, where we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then the Attendance Officer or member of the office team will telephone home daily. If by 9.45 am no response is received other contacts held for the child will also be contacted. If we have not heard from any contacts, then a home visit may be conducted.

If no response is received to this home visit, the child is referred to the Local Authority as a possible Child Missing Education. Contact may also be made with Children's Services and/or the police in line with safeguarding procedures.

## **Illness**

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services to see if arrangements can be made for the child to be given some home tuition outside school.

Where over the course of an academic year, a pupil has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents/carers to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

## Parental Request for Absence from School for Holiday

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of the Headteacher to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year. Instead, the Headteacher will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied that **exceptional circumstances** exist.

**Should parents/carers be considering a holiday during term time a leave of absence request form must be completed by all adults with parental responsibility BEFORE the holiday is booked.** Where a holiday is not authorised, consideration will be given to requesting a penalty notice from the Local Authority for this period of absence if a child's attendance is deemed as 'not regular'. **This is defined by the Trust as:** where the child's attendance is less than 96% for the previous twelve months at the time of the request.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent/carer, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

## Promoting Good Attendance

Weekly attendance report inline with the school target reported to parents.

Weekly notification in the newsletter of classes with excellent attendance.

Individualised reward systems for children with low attendance where appropriate.

Improved Attendance Certificates for children, whose attendance improves in line with expectations laid out in attendance letters – from half termly attendance data checks (see Appendix E).

## Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## Addressing Attendance Concerns

- The school expects attendance to be of 96% for all pupils excepting those with chronic health issues.

It is important for pupils to establish good attendance habits early on in their school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. Parents/carers should ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance, parents/carers are always informed.

Concerns about attendance are raised with parents/carers via texts/letters and phone calls home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance.

Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period then attendance clinics or home visits will be undertaken.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure regular attendance and if they fail to do so, may commit an offence under Sections 7 & 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## **Monitoring and reviewing attendance within school**

### **The Headteacher / Senior Leader will ensure that:**

- A recording and reporting system is in place and maintained;
- Attendance statistics, strategies and impacts are reported to the Senior Leadership Team and to the Trust.
- The school has an annual Attendance Action Plan – strategically planning how to maintain attendance inline with trust expectations.

### **The Governing Body:**

- Provides scrutiny of the termly monitoring reports on attendance and the implementation and effectiveness of this policy.
  - The Attendance Governor monitors progress towards the targets in the Attendance Action Plan and the school's attendance monitoring process.

## **Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

## **Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## **Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Sending letters (see appendix) outlining the attendance issues, the actions expected and the improvements required
  - School letters:
    - 1 then 2A or
    - 2B
- Send letters inviting parents/ guardians to attendance clinics (letter 3 – Appendix) with the EWO if improvements from initial letters regarding attendance do not lead to the required improvements.
- Facilitate attendance clinics with the EWO – outlining expected improvements and next steps.

### **Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance**

Parents are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered.

The school will:

- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and, if applicable, ensure the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners and make timely referrals

where necessary.

- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.

### **Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and as a minimum every 2 years by the Trust. At every review, the policy will be approved by the Trust Board.



## Appendix A – AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM TIME

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**WARNING:** If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent/carer per child or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child’s education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason. \*Penalty notice £60 if paid within 21 days increasing to £120 if paid after 21 days and before 28 days.

<b>Avoidable absence in term time</b>	
<b>The Facts</b>	<b>The Law</b>
<p>School aged pupils in Cornwall maintained schools are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Whilst there are a number of unavoidable reasons why a pupil might be away from school (illness, medical appointments, exclusions etc.) the legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p> <p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and you may receive a £60* fine per parent per child if your child’s attendance is deemed to be ‘not regular’, falling below the Trust’s threshold (96%).</li> </ul>	<p>The law allows the school to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However, before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are <b>exceptional circumstances</b> which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient evidence/information to establish this fact. The request for leave must come from the parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away for a period of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006</p> <p>In case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>
<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised. Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genuine illness</li> <li>• Unavoidable medical/dental appointments</li> </ul>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not</u> be authorised include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any type of shopping</li> <li>• Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li> </ul>

<p>(but try to make these after school if at all possible).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Days of religious observance.</li> <li>• Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li> <li>• External examinations</li> <li>• When traveller children are on the road with their parents for work purposes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minding the house</li> <li>• Birthdays</li> <li>• Resting after a late night</li> <li>• Relatives visiting or visiting relatives.</li> <li>• Parental appointments</li> </ul>
<p>Please contact the Headteacher if you wish to discuss this issue.</p> <p><b>The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full-time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.</b></p> <p>We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child’s education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.</p>	

## Appendix B - INFORMATION LETTER TO ALL PARENTS/CARERS (ANNUAL)

### Whole School Warning Letter regarding unauthorised leave of absence (holidays)

#### NAME AND ADDRESS

Dear Parent/Carer,

Here at St Hilary School, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence, such as when a pupil is genuinely too ill to attend school, has a medical appointment that cannot be taken outside of school hours or a request for leave has been agreed in exceptional circumstances.

However, the Government does not support parents taking children out of school unless the school agrees this is appropriate under 'exceptional circumstances'. Any request for leave should be made in writing to the Headteacher using the school's request form.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

You are welcome to contact the school to discuss any concerns you may have regarding this or if you feel you would like advice or support in helping your child attend school more regularly. St Hilary School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved.

The decision to submit a request for the issue of a Penalty Notice will be considered when a child's attendance is deemed to be 'not regular'. The definition of 'not regular' in this instance, is when it is below the threshold set by Leading Edge (currently set at 96%). A child's attendance for the previous 3 terms will be considered before deciding on a course of action.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix C – EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE LEAVE REQUEST NOTICE TO PARENTS/CARERS

The law does not grant parents an automatic right to take their child out of school during term time. Any absence from school will disrupt your child's learning. You may consider that a holiday will be educational, but your child will miss out on the teaching that their classmates will receive during your holiday. Attendance is vital to academic success and lost education poses a potential risk of underachievement. This is something we all have a responsibility to avoid.

The Department for Education no longer allows Headteachers to grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you consider that your request for absence is exceptional you will need to complete the form attached to this notification. A response will be sent to you as soon as possible. If leave is not authorised and you nevertheless withdraw your child from school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

All requests must be completed on this form; letters will not be accepted. This form should be returned to the Attendance Office at least 15 school days before the start of the absence.

I hope you will support our efforts in raising attendance and attainment at St Hilary School

**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER (to be completed by each parent/carer)**

If you consider an absence during term time to be an exceptional circumstance, please complete this form and return it to the Attendance Office **at least 15 school days** before the date you wish to remove your child from school.

**Pupil Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **DOB:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year/Tutor Group:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Home Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Post Code:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of Parent/Carer completing this form:** \_\_\_\_\_

**First day of absence:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date of return to school:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If leaving your home address before the first day of absence, please provide the date on which you will leave:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Total number of days missed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **days** **Reason for absence:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*I understand that if the absence request is unauthorised the school may request that Cornwall Council issue a Penalty Notice. I understand that a Penalty Notice is issued to each liable parent/carer of each child taken out of school and that this carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid within 28 days. I understand that if I do not pay the fine, it may result in legal action being taken against me. I understand that parents have a duty to ensure their child's regular attendance at school and failure to do so is an offence under Section 444(1) and Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996.*

**Please inform us if you have a child in another local school, as we will need to contact the school to discuss the absence request. Please note, we will need to share information about your child with the other school.**

**Name of child** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year** \_\_\_\_\_ **School** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signed:** ..... **Date:** .....

*(Please ensure you give at least 15 school days' notice of the proposed absence)*

**Below to be completed by the school:**

**FAO – Headteacher**

% Current	% Last Year	Comments

Pupil Name: ..... Tutor: ..... Year: .....

**AUTHORISED:**

Request has been authorised for the following dates **only**:

\_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

**UNAUTHORISED:**

Signed ..... **Headteacher**

Date \_\_\_ / \_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Letter sent / Phone Call / other	Signed:	Date:
Action: PN Request	Signed:	Date:

## Appendix D: PN MODEL LEAVE REFUSAL LETTER (for school use)

NAME AND ADDRESS

Date:

Dear Name of parent/carer(s),

I am writing regarding your request to take (Pupil Name) out of school on [date] until [date].

The law states that a planned absence from school should only be authorised for pupils in 'exceptional circumstances'. Here at St Hilary School, we recognise that there are occasions when it is appropriate to authorise an absence; we look at each request on its own merit, before reaching a decision.

Under the circumstances, we regret that on this occasion we are unable to authorise your request for absence. If (Pupil Name) does not attend school on the dates concerned, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. In cases where parents subsequently report their child as ill during this period, medical evidence may be requested to support this.

I urge you to reconsider your decision.

If your child is absent from school without authorisation, you will be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996. We may submit a request to Cornwall Council for a Penalty Notice to be issued, in accordance with Sections 444A and 444B of the said Act. Penalty Notices are issued per liable parent, per child and each carry a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after this but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in legal action. Absence not authorised by the school may result in a prosecution in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444(1) or Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, leading to a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a custodial sentence. Cornwall Council may also apply for the costs incurred in taking the matter to Court.

'Parent' as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, defines parent to include: natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person or body who has parental responsibility for a child (as defined by the Children Act 1989) and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child. Having care of a child means a person with whom a child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with said child.

I would like to offer you the opportunity to contact the school office at St Hilary School if you would like advice or support in helping your child attend more regularly. St Hilary School is committed to maximising the education of all its pupils and aims to work with parents to ensure this can be achieved. If you would like to discuss this matter further, please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

## Appendix E: School letters

### St Hilary Attendance Letter 1:

2022

Dear XXXX

#### Attendance Review:

Attendance rates of all children at St Hilary are reviewed on a regular basis: we have a duty to work with parents and carers to maintain the highest possible attendance rates. Our motivation for this ongoing assessment is the logical connection between children's higher attendance rates (illness aside) and their positive well-being and progress - academically, emotionally, physically and socially. These weekly assessments are guided by government attendance expectations and close work with our Education Welfare Officers (EWO).

#### School response to attendance concerns:

When our assessments identify a child, whose attendance is cause for concern, we contact the parents / carers. In making this contact we aim to strengthen our working partnership and rebuild the child's attendance rates to levels that best promote well-being, happiness and progress. The two triggers for these letters are:

1. Attendance dropping below 90% - this is the rate which the government identifies as 'persistent absence'
2. Numerous 'broken weeks' (+half of the weeks in a half term / term / year) - separate instances of absence over a number of weeks: schooling is being regularly interrupted with absence

As well as being uniformly addressed in a letter, these instances are also followed up / considered by the school's EWO. As such, we would like to bring your attention to your child's current attendance figures:

<b>Attendance rate:</b>	<b>Number weeks with a recorded absence:</b>
-------------------------	--

This low attendance rate will be having a considerable impact on your child's academic and social development and performance and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Seeing progress with this attendance percentage is essential and if managed will help to re-establish healthy and expected attendance habits moving forward.

#### Next steps:

We will continue to our regular monitoring, with the expectation that your child's 'persistence absence' will reduce. However, if we do not see improvement or their attendance becomes a concern again in the future, we will need to move to a situation where all absence is backed-up by official medical certificates and set up an Attendance Clinic. This clinic, with parent / carer, school and EWO present, would provide time to address our concerns and draw up a joint plan for improved attendance.

I trust that you recognise the importance of the school's role in maintaining attendance levels – safeguarding the children's well-being and progress - and that you can take action to improve your child's attendance levels as quickly as possible. If you would like to discuss this matter further or if there is anything that you feel we need to be aware of or could offer you support with, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Kindest regards

**Rob Hamshar**

Headteacher - St Hilary School

[head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk)

01736 76332



## St Hilary Attendance Letter 2A – First Letter – significantly below expectation, in danger of severe:

2022

Dear XXXX

### Ongoing Attendance Review

Further to our recent analysis of pupil attendance, we are contacting you to inform you of the concerns we have and the next steps we are required to take.

Unfortunately, your child's attendance rate is significantly below both the national expectation of 95%, and the more concerning the 90% attendance rate classified as Persistent Absence:

**Attendance rate:**                      **Number weeks with a recorded absence:**

This low attendance has a significant and negative impact on the quality of your child's learning and potential for social, emotional and academic progress and we have a duty of care to address it.

Due to this concern, it is vital that we outline the school's next steps designed to help progress towards expected levels of attendance. These steps were drawn up after consultation with our Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

- Future absences must be supported by an official medical note advising on the requirement for absence and expected length of absence.
- Without this, the school will record the absence as unauthorised.
- The equivalent of 5-days unauthorised absence (including any unauthorised absences already recorded) will trigger an EWO attendance clinic – a meeting to explain expectations, steps for improved attendance and what further actions will be taken if attendance rates do not improve.
- ***If an improved attendance rate is achieved moving forward, these steps will be avoided.***

Seeing progress with this attendance percentage is essential and if managed will help to re-establish healthy and expected attendance habits moving forward.

While I appreciate that the message delivered here is direct, I would like to take this chance to reassure you that the purpose of the letter is to both inform you of school procedures, but more importantly to establish a supportive base for improving your child's attendance. As a team, we must work together to ensure that your child gets the very best educational opportunities to achieve and progress and have the best chance to fulfil their potential. If you should like to discuss this matter further or provide further detail that you feel is important surrounding your child's absence this year, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I look forward to continuing working with you and supporting you and your child to make these fundamental improvements for their future at school and beyond.

Kindest regards

**Rob Hamshar**

Headteacher - St Hilary School

[head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk)

01736 76332

## St Hilary Attendance Letter 2B – 2<sup>nd</sup> letter:

2022

Dear XXXX

### **Ongoing Attendance Review**

Further to our attendance letter sent in XXXX, I am writing regarding your child's continuing low rate of attendance. The first letter stated the need for an improvement in your child's attendance rate as a matter of urgency: (QUOTE)

Unfortunately, your child's persistent absence rate has worsened and / or remains well below the expected attendance rate of 90%. This continued low attendance has a significant and negative impact on the quality of your child's learning and potential for social, emotional and academic progress and we have a duty of care to address it.

**Attendance rate:                      Number weeks with a recorded absence:**

Due to this ongoing concern, it is vital that we outline the school's next steps designed to help ensure expected levels of attendance are achieved. These steps were drawn up after consultation with our Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

- Future absences must be supported by an official medical note advising on the requirement for absence and expected length of absence.
- Without this, the school will record the absence as unauthorised.
- The equivalent of 5-days unauthorised absence (including any unauthorised absences already recorded) will trigger an EWO attendance clinic – a meeting to explain expectations, steps for improved attendance and what further actions will be taken if attendance rates do not improve.
- ***If an improved attendance rate is achieved moving forward, these steps will be avoided.***

Seeing progress with this attendance percentage is essential and if managed will help to re-establish healthy and expected attendance habits moving forward.

While I appreciate that the message delivered here is direct, I would like to take this chance to reassure you that the purpose of the letter is to both inform you of school procedures, but more importantly to establish a supportive base for improving your child's attendance. As a team, we must work together to ensure that your child gets the very best educational opportunities to achieve and progress and have the best chance to fulfil their potential. If you should like to discuss this matter further or provide further detail that you feel is important regarding your child's absence this year, please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and I look forward to continuing working with you and supporting you and your child to make these fundamental improvements for their future at school and beyond.

Kindest regards

**Rob Hamshar**

Headteacher - St Hilary School

[head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk)

01736 76332

### **St Hilary Attendance Letter 3 – invitation to an attendance clinic with the EWO:**

2022

Dear Parents/Carers

**Re: School Attendance – Attendance Clinic**

Further to the school's previous correspondence regarding XXXXX's attendance, I am writing to invite you to an Attendance Meeting at St Hilary School on ----- at -----pm with me and Fran Pender (Education Welfare Officer).

The purpose of meeting is to review previous attendance letters sent with Fran Pender and I and to look at ways that we can work together to support \*\*\*\*\* to improve their attendance.

If you are unable to attend this meeting, please contact me by email at [head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk) so that we can re-arrange the appointment.

Kindest regards

**Rob Hamshar**

Headteacher - St Hilary School

[head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk](mailto:head@st-hilary.cornwall.sch.uk)

Tel: 01736 76332

cc. File, EWO

Enc – attendance certificate